

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An isolated koji mold having increased protease activity and peptidase activity in relation to a parent strain resulting from transformation with a protease nucleic acid sequence and a peptidase nucleic acid sequence, wherein the isolated koji mold has at least 3 times greater protease activity and at least 5 times greater peptidase activity than the parent strain.

2. (Previously Amended) The isolated koji mold according to claim 1, wherein the protease nucleic acid sequence and the peptidase nucleic acid sequence are of koji mold origin.

3. (Previously Amended) The isolated koji mold according to claim 1, wherein said isolated koji mold is a member of *Aspergillus sojae*, *Aspergillus oryzae*, or *Aspergillus tamarii*.

4. (Previously Amended) The isolated koji mold according to claim 3, wherein the protease nucleic acid sequence and the peptidase nucleic acid sequence are of koji mold origin.

5. (Previously Amended) A method of breeding the isolated koji mold according to any one of claims 1 to 4 comprising the steps of:

- (a) transforming a parent strain of koji mold with a protease nucleic acid sequence and a peptidase nucleic acid sequence; and,
- (b) selecting a transformant having increased protease activity and peptidase activity relative to said parent strain.

6. (Previously Amended) A method of manufacturing a flavor enhancer which comprises allowing a culture product of the isolated koji mold according to any one of claims 1 to 4 to act on a protein.

7. (Previously Amended) A flavor enhancer obtainable by allowing a culture product of the isolated koji mold according to any one of claims 1 to 4 to act on a protein.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~The isolated koji mold of claim 1,~~ An isolated koji mold having increased protease activity and peptidase activity in relation to a parent strain resulting from transformation with a protease nucleic acid sequence and a peptidase nucleic acid sequence, wherein the protease nucleic acid sequence encodes the same amino acid sequence as that encoded by the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, and the peptidase nucleic acid sequence encodes the same amino acid sequence as that encoded by the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

9. (Cancel).

10. (New) A method of breeding the isolated koji mold according to claim 8 comprising the steps of:

(a) transforming a parent strain of koji mold with the protease nucleic acid sequence and the peptidase nucleic acid sequence; and,

(b) selecting a transformant having increased protease activity and peptidase activity relative to said parent strain.

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11. (New) A method of manufacturing a flavor enhancer which comprises allowing a culture product of the isolated koji mold according to claim 8 to act on a protein.

12. (New) A flavor enhancer obtainable by allowing a culture product of the isolated koji mold according to claim 8 to act on a protein.

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